

August 19, 1974

Dr. Martin Freeth
British Broadcasting Corporation
Kensington House
Richmond Way
London W14 0AX ENGLAND

Dear Mr. Freeth,

Thank you for your letter of June 28th. It would be difficult to stage an adversary debate on issues like world health, since we are frustrated by apathy and disinterest rather than by overt opposition.

I think we could have a lively presentation on "Are scientists meeting their responsibilities in furthering world health and human well-being; and if not, why not?"

In my view the barriers can be categorized as

1. International political complexities
There is no world tax base for world health
2. Intranational competition for resources
Health vs. other goods
Indirectness of returns on investments
Cultural barriers to optimal health
(e.g. diseases of affluence
" " ignorance)
3. Conflicts within professional and academic convention
 - a) Health service vs. research
 - b) Inadequate communication among basic and applied research

If I were to take part, I might stress 3b together with some prescriptions about productive opportunities -
applications of molecular biology to
tropical disease
nutrition
environmental hygiene
acceleration of development and validation of new drugs.

Some people who come to mind are

Sir Peter Medawar, London
Dr. G.J.V. Nossal, Melbourne
Dr. A. Buzzatti Traverso, Paris (UNESCO) and Rome.

FREETH, M.

8/19/74

W.H.O. is obviously at the center of these concerns. Perhaps you should build a program with just that focus: is WHO doing the job expected of it, and if not why not. This would not exclude any of my previous suggestions but would also embrace the director of WHO and various past and present members of its Adv. Com. Med. Res. - see copy of enclosed list.

In addition, interesting and well-informed personalities in WHO are:
Deputy-Director General Chang (P.R. China)
Dr. Martin Kaplan - Director of Research Programs.

I know of only one political-analytical study of WHO (outside of its own reports):

H.K. Jacobson (~~University of Wisconsin~~) and R.W. Cox and Jacobson
"Anatomy of Influence", Yale U. Press, 1973.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr
Enclosure